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**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS
SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 3 & 4, 2003**

Under the provisions of M.G.L. Ch 30A and pursuant to the authority found in M.G.L. Ch. 130 ss. 17A, 80, and 104, Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) and the Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) have scheduled hearings on the following regulatory proposals. Contact DMF for draft regulations and further details.

1. DMF proposals (based on a public petition) to further regulate the hand-harvest of sea scallops (322 CMR 6.05).
 - a) Establish a recreational limit of one to two bushels of whole scallops or two to four quarts of shucked meats;
 - b) Require a "sea scallop-diving" endorsement at no additional cost for commercial fishermen who harvest sea scallops by hand using SCUBA;
 - c) Establish "reciprocal licensing" for this endorsement where residents from any state that allows only in-state residents to participate in commercial scallop diving would be prohibited from obtaining the "sea scallop-diving" endorsement;
 - d) On vessels with SCUBA divers aboard where the scallop quantities exceed recreational possession limits, require all divers to possess individual commercial permits endorsed for sea scallop-diving (\$65 residents / \$130 for non-residents);
 - e) Establish a commercial season for scallop diving that matches New Hampshire's (November 1 – April 14).
2. DMF proposal to lower the recreational bag limit for weakfish (322 CMR 8.06) from 12 to 10 fish to comply with the interstate plan.
3. DMF proposal to amend tautog (322 CMR 8.06) recreational catch limits. To reduce harvest by 29%, four options can be considered:
 - a) 3-fish daily possession limit & no closed season;
 - b) 4-fish daily possession limit & May 10 - June 14 closed season;
 - c) 5-fish daily possession limit & May 10 - July 10 closed season; or
 - d) 6-fish daily possession limit & May 20 - September 10 closed season
4. DMF proposal to amend commercial permitting and reporting for tautog. Commercial fishermen landing tautog would be required to purchase and possess a species-specific regulated fishery permit (322 CMR 8.08(10)), and dealers would be required to report all tautog purchases from commercial fishermen to DMF.
5. DMF proposals to a) allocate throughout 2003 a black sea bass commercial quota to be divided into separate seasonal periods to preserve some traditional spring, summer, and fall fisheries; and b) establish different daily possession limits by gear type and no-fishing (322 CMR 6.28(3)).
6. DMF proposals to enact scup possession limits (322 CMR 6.28(1)) consistent with federal rules for the Winter I and Winter II periods (January – April & November – December).
 - a) The Winter I daily possession limit trigger (cumulative catch that triggers a lowering of the regional trip limit) would be lowered from 85% to 80%.
 - b) Winter II trip limit of 1,500 lbs would be enacted.
7. DMF proposal to amend the trap tag regulations (322 CMR 6.31) to prohibit the possession of any untagged traps on a commercial fishing vessel.
8. DMF proposal to adopt Lobster Management Area specific regulations (322 CMR 6.01 & 6.33) as mandated by the ASMFC ISFMP for American Lobster for all areas outside of Massachusetts jurisdiction.
9. DMF proposal to limit non-commercial lobster fisherman authorized as described in 322 CMR 7.01(4)(b)(1) to a 5 trap limit and those authorized as described in 322 CMR 7.01(4)(b)(2) to a possession limit of 10 lobster/day per person (322 CMR 6.13 & 6.26), and to enact a minimum size limit of 3 3/8 inches (322 CMR 6.01(2)).
10. DMF proposal to adopt emergency regulation (322 CMR 6.03) that prohibits the mutilation of cod in such a way as to interfere with or affect a proper or adequate measurement of the fish. The weight of fillets and parts of fish, other than whole-gutted or gilled fish would be multiplied by three.

Two public hearings have been scheduled for:
Monday, February 3, 2003 (7-10PM) at the Gloucester High School and
Tuesday, February 4, 2003 (7-10PM) at the Plymouth North High School.

For further information please visit our website at www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.